



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
for CRVS Systems

LE CENTRE D'EXCELLENCE
sur les systèmes ESEC

SNAPSHOT

OF CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEMS OF

RWANDA



ECA

Program information

About the Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems

Housed at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems is a global knowledge and resource hub that actively supports national efforts to develop, strengthen, and scale-up CRVS systems. It collaborates with organizations and experts to broker access to information and expertise, including global standards, tools, research evidence, and relevant good practice.

The Centre of Excellence was established with funding from Global Affairs Canada and IDRC and contributes directly to the work of the Global Financing Facility, a key financing platform of the UN Secretary General's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health.

About the International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Part of Canada's foreign affairs and development efforts, IDRC invests in knowledge, innovation, and solutions to improve the lives of people in the developing world. IDRC works with many stakeholders, including civil society organizations, think tanks, regional organizations, and government departments to promote growth, reduce poverty, and drive large-scale positive change.

Published by the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems, in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). This publication was authored by Hosea Mitala for the Centre of Excellence and UNECA.

Acknowledgements

The development of this snapshot would not have been possible without the cooperation and support from the National Identification Agency (NIDA) and National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) management and staff, who provided valuable information and made time for meetings despite their busy schedules.

This report benefited from key insights provided by NIDA Director General Josephine Mukesha and NISR Deputy Director General Ivan Murenzi, and their teams. Thanks to Stephen Bugingo from NIDA for continuous support in coordinating and providing useful information.

International Development Research Centre
PO Box 8500
Ottawa, ON, Canada
Email: crvs@idrc.ca
www.CRVSystems.ca

© International Development Research Centre 2021

The research presented in this publication was carried out with financial and technical assistance from the Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems. Housed at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), it is jointly funded by Global Affairs Canada and IDRC. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of Global Affairs Canada, IDRC, or its Board of Governors.

Please visit CRVSystems.ca/country-profiles to see the latest version of this profile or to consult the published profiles of other countries.

Contents

Program information	ii
Introduction	2
Brief country profile	2
CRVS dimensions	3
Civil registration system	4
Legislative framework	4
Management, organization, and operations	5
Vital statistics system	14
Vital statistics	14
Causes of death	14
Digitization	16
Computerization	16
Population register	19
Interface with other sectors and operations	21
Improvement initiatives and external support	21
Improvement plan and budget	21
Support from development partners	23
Conclusion	24
Resources	25
Websites	25
Additional materials	25
Annex 1: Civil registration in local government points of service (structure)	26
Annex 2: Civil registration at health facilities and courts points of service (structure)	27
Endnotes	28

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a brief introduction to the civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) system in Rwanda.

The information was collected through a questionnaire completed by the National Identification Agency and the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda in April 2020 and supplemented by a desk review of available documents.

Among other things, the report presents:

- Background information on the country;
- Selected indicators relevant for CRVS improvement processes;
- Stakeholders' activities; and
- Resources available to strengthen CRVS systems.

Brief country profile

The Republic of Rwanda is a landlocked country in the Great Rift Valley where the African Great Lakes region and East Africa meet. Located a few degrees south of the Equator, Rwanda is bordered by Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is dominated by mountains in the west and savannah to the east, with numerous lakes throughout the country. Rwanda is the most densely populated mainland African country.

Rwanda is divided into provinces (*intara*), districts (*uturere*), cities, municipalities, towns, sectors (*imirenge*), cells (*utugari*), and villages (*imidugudu*). The country has a decentralized system of governance, with 5 provinces including the City of Kigali, 30 districts, 416 sectors, and 2,148 cells (as of 2016).

Rwanda



Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

- Land area:¹ 26,338 km²
- Population: 12.3 million (estimated),² with an annual growth rate of 2.6 percent.³ As of 2012, 16.5 percent live in urban areas, while 83.5 percent⁴ live in rural areas. The population is made up of about 48.5 percent males and 51.5 percent females.
- Capital city: Kigali
- Official working languages: English, French, Kinyarwanda, Swahili
- Ministry responsible for civil registration: Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC)
- Civil registration agency: National Identification Agency (NIDA)
- National statistical office: National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR)

CRVS dimensions

Births	
Completeness of birth registration ⁵	56% (2017) ⁶
Children under 5 years of age whose births were reported as registered	56% (2015) ⁷
Births attended by skilled health personnel	Not available
Women aged 15–49 who received antenatal care from a skilled provider	44% (2015) ⁸
DPT immunization coverage among 1-year-olds ⁹	70% (2018) ¹⁰
Crude birth rate (per 1,000 population)	32.6 (2017) ¹¹
Total fertility rate (live births per woman)	4 (2018)
Adolescent fertility rate (per 1,000 girls aged 15–19 years)	39 (2017) ¹²
Population under age 15 years	Not available
Institutional deliveries — percentage of deliveries in a health facility	91% (2010)
Deaths	
Completeness of death registration	96% (2017)
Crude death rate (per 1,000 population)	5.3 (2017)
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	27 (2018) ¹³
Under-5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	35.3 (2018)
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	275 (2015) ¹⁴
Marriages and divorces	
Marriage registration rate	Not available
Women aged 20–24 first married or in union before age 15	0.4% ¹⁵
Women aged 20–24 first married or in union before age 18	6.8% ¹⁶
Divorce registration rate	Not available
Vital statistics including causes-of-death data	
Compilation and dissemination of civil registration-based statistics	Not available
Medically certified causes of death	Not available

Civil registration system

Registration of vital events started during the colonial period in Rwanda. However, the registration laws were only for nationals of the colonial powers. The laws regulating civil registration in Rwanda evolved with the stages of its political and administrative history. During the colonial period, from 1931 up to the end of 1961, and under the decree of 4 May 1895 on the Civil Code of Persons Book One, all Rwandans aged 18 years and above were issued identity cards known as an identity booklet, or *Ibuku*, which was written in both the Dutch and Kinyarwanda languages.

The booklet contained information on names, approximate dates of birth, parents' names, sex, marital status, height, names of descendants, profession, and ethnic or clan affiliation. Just before independence, the Decree on Registration of Civil Status of the Population in Rwanda was amended by the order issued on 25 July 1961 by the then-Belgian governor. This order continued to be used after independence in 1962 with a few amendments, such as assigning the civil registration responsibilities to the Ministry of Internal Security.

On 27 October 1988, the order was repealed and replaced by Law No. 42/1988, which instituted the Preliminary Title and Book One of the Civil Code. This new law made registration of vital events compulsory on Rwandan territory and was in place until 28 August 2016, when *Law No. 32/2016 Governing Persons and Family* was enacted. In line with the law, the coordination and supervision of civil registration-related activities were transferred from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Local Government.

From independence until 2006, the lowest office for registration was at the district level. With the second phase of decentralization in 2006, the

responsibilities of civil registration were extended down to the sector level. The sector executive secretary was added to the list of civil registrars in the country with the aim of bringing most-needed services closer to the population. The National Identification Agency (NIDA) was established by Law No. 43/2011 and mandated population registration, civil registration, and issuance of a national identity card.¹⁷

When NIDA was established, major reforms were undertaken and aligned with guidelines from the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS).

Rwanda undertook a comprehensive assessment of the CRVS system. It drafted the CRVS National Strategic Plan for 2017/18–2021/22 with the purpose of focusing the energy, resources, and time of all relevant actors on a common purpose and direction. The goal is to ensure that human and material resources are used efficiently and respond to local needs.

Legislative framework

The laws governing civil registration in Rwanda include the following:

- *Law No. 42/1988 Instituting the Preliminary Title and Book One of the Civil Code*, which came into force in 1988;
- *Law No. 32/2016 Governing Persons and Family*, which came into force in 2016; and
- *Law No. 001/2020 amending Law No. 32/2016*, which came into force in 2020.

The vital events discussed in legislation include births, deaths, marriages, divorces, annulments of marriage, adoptions, legitimizations, recognition of a child born out of wedlock, and guardianship to a minor or a person of full age. These cover all legal geographic areas of Rwanda and its entire population, including non-citizens and refugees.

Management, organization, and operations

National CRVS systems coordination mechanisms

In Rwanda, NIDA is responsible for civil registration. NIDA is under the Ministry of Local Government.

These are the other ministries and agencies responsible for CRVS:

- Ministry of Health: notification of vital events that happen in health facilities;
- Ministry of Justice: notification of divorces, annulments, and separations; and
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation: notification and registration of vital events for Rwandese who are living abroad.

The organizational structures for civil registration are provided in Annexes 1 and 2.

A national technical working group provides a forum for stakeholders in CRVS systems. It is made up of representatives from the following entities (see Table 1):

- Ministry of Local Government;
- Ministry of Health;
- Ministry of Justice;
- Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion;
- Ministry of ICT and Innovation;
- National Identification Agency;
- National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda;
- National Commission for Children;
- Rwanda Law Reform Commission;
- Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration; and
- Rwanda Biomedical Centre.

Table 1: National committee and working group member departments, organizations, and agencies.

Name of national coordination mechanisms	Member departments, organizations, and agencies
CRVS High Level Coordination Committee (at ministerial level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister of Local Government • Minister of Health • Minister of Justice • Minister of Gender and Family Promotion
CRVS Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent Secretaries of Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Justice (MINIJUST), Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) • Directors General of the National Identification Agency (NIDA) and National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) • Executive Secretary of the National Children's Council (NCC)
CRVS Technical Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MINALOC, MoH, MINIJUST, MIGEPROF, Ministry of ICT and Innovation (MINICT), NIDA, NISR, NCC, Rwanda Law Reform Commission (RLRC), Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE), Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC)
CRVS Technical Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIDA, MINALOC, MoH, MINIJUST, MIGEPROF, MINICT, NISR, NCC, RLRC, DGIE, RBC

The establishment and functioning of the CRVS governance structure is stipulated in the CRVS National Strategic Plan.¹⁸

Administrative-level registration centres

The lowest administrative level is the cell level. There are 2,148 cells that serve as local civil registration offices or service points, with 416 in urban areas and 1,732 in rural areas. There are 3,186 local civil registrars.

There are also 590 civil registration service points at health facilities for birth and death registration, 33 courts for the notification of events that take place in courts, and 33 embassies and high commissions for registering events that take place abroad.

Accessibility of civil registration services

The average distance of most households from the nearest local registration office is 1 to 5 km. The average estimated time it would take most households to reach their nearest local registration

office is 1 to 4 hours by foot, or less than 1 hour by car.

Registration of vital events

There are seven registers of civil status (Article 74 of Law No. 32/2016):

- Register of birth records;
- Register of death records;
- Register of marriage records;
- Register of guardianship records;
- Register of acknowledgement of children born out of wedlock;
- Register of adoption records; and
- Register of other records.

There are also registers that are maintained as administrative records of the resident population of the area, and registers that are administrative records of births, deaths, and marriages (Table 2). These are distinct from the civil registers mentioned above.

Table 2: Civil status registers and other tools.

	Registration form/book	Issued document	Value/function
1	Register of Acts of Births	Act of Birth (copy or extract)	Legal
2	Register of Births	Attestation (certificate) of Birth	Administrative
3	Register of Acts of Death	Act of Birth (copy or extract)	Legal
4	Register of Deaths	Attestation (certificate) of Death	Administrative
5	Register of Acts of Marriage	Act of Marriage (copy or extract)	Legal
6	Register of Marriages	Attestation (certificate) of Marriage	Administrative
7	Register of Acts of Adoption	Act of Adoption (copy or extract)	Legal
8	Register of Acts of Recognition	Act of Recognition (copy or extract)	Legal
9	Register of Other Records	Others	Administrative
10	Register of Guardianship Records	None	Administrative
11	Population Registry Form	None	Administrative (for updating the central population database)

Procedures for registering vital events

BIRTHS

Births at healthcare facilities

- Midwife records the birth in the maternity register at a healthcare facility.
- Data manager records the birth within two different systems: Health Management Information Systems and CRVS.
- Birth declarant goes to the civil registration office of the healthcare facility to declare the birth.
- Civil registration office registers the birth in the CRVS system: a unique national ID number (NIN) is generated for the registered birth. The CRVS system automatically pushes the details of the registered birth to the National Population Registry (NPR). NPR saves the record and automatically generates an application number linked to that NIN. Different stakeholders will use this NIN for various purposes.
- Once requested, the CRVS system generates the birth record and makes it available to Irembo (the e-service portal).
- The baby's birth record (certificate) is requested through Irembo using the NIN.
- The CRVS system produces and makes vital statistics available to stakeholders.

Births in the community

- The community health worker or village chief reports the birth to the cell executive secretary.
- The cell executive secretary notifies and registers the birth in the CRVS system, a unique NIN is generated for the registered birth, and the CRVS system automatically pushes the details of the registered birth to the NPR.
- The NPR saves the record and automatically generates an application number linked to that NIN. Different stakeholders will use this NIN for various purposes.
- Once requested, the CRVS system generates the birth record and makes it available to Irembo.

- The baby's birth record (certificate) is requested through Irembo using the NIN.
- The CRVS system produces and makes vital statistics available to the stakeholders.

Births abroad

- Birth declarant goes to a Rwandan embassy, high commission, or consulate.
- Civil registration officer at the embassy notifies the birth in the CRVS system.
- The civil registrar at the embassy registers the birth in the CRVS system, a unique NIN is generated for the registered birth, and the CRVS system automatically pushes the details of the registered birth to NPR.
- NPR saves the record and automatically generates an application number linked to that NIN. Different stakeholders will use this NIN for various purposes.
- Once requested, the CRVS system generates the birth record and makes it available to Irembo.
- The baby's birth record (certificate) is requested through Irembo using the NIN.
- The CRVS system produces and makes vital statistics available to the respective stakeholders.

DEATHS

Deaths at a healthcare facility

- The data manager records or notifies the death within two different systems: Health Management Information System and CRVS.
- The death declarant declares the death to the civil registrar at the same healthcare facility.
- The civil registrar registers the death in the CRVS, a unique NIN is generated for the registered death, and the CRVS system automatically pushes the deceased's details, along with their NIN and application number, to NPR. NPR updates the deceased's profile (vital status).

- Once the death record (certificate) is requested, the CRVS system generates it and makes it available to Irembo.
- The death record (certificate) is requested through Irembo using the NIN.
- The CRVS system produces and makes vital statistics available to the respective stakeholders.

Deaths in the community

- The village chief reports the death to the cell executive secretary, and the family of the deceased declares the death to the cell executive secretary.
- The cell executive secretary notifies and registers the death in the CRVS system, a unique NIN is generated, and the CRVS system automatically pushes the deceased's details, along with their NIN and application number, to NPR. NPR updates the deceased's profile (vital status).
- Once the death record (certificate) is requested, the CRVS system generates it and makes it available to Irembo.
- The death record (certificate) is requested through Irembo using the NIN.
- The CRVS system produces and makes vital statistics available to the respective stakeholders.

Deaths abroad

- The death declarant goes to the embassy, high commission, or consulate to declare the death.
- The civil registration officer at the embassy notifies the death in the CRVS.
- The civil registrar at the embassy registers the death in the CRVS system, a unique NIN is generated for the registered death, and the CRVS system automatically pushes the deceased's details, along with their NIN and application number, to NPR. NPR updates the deceased's profile (vital status).

- Once the death record (certificate) is requested, the CRVS system generates it and makes it available to Irembo.
- The death record (certificate) is requested through Irembo using the NIN.
- The CRVS system produces and makes vital statistics available to the respective stakeholders.

MARRIAGES

Marriages on Rwandan territory

- The couple declares their marriage intention on Irembo.
- Through Irembo, the civil registration officer verifies the eligibility criteria.
- Once all marriage criteria are met, the civil registration officer approves it and Irembo automatically pushes the marriage declaration to the CRVS system.
- The civil registration officer publishes a list of the intending couples on the public notice board 20 days before the wedding.
- The marriage is celebrated at the sector level; the civil registrar registers the marriage in the CRVS system, and the NIN is generated to each spouse if they didn't have one before.
- The CRVS system pushes the details of the married couple to NPR; NPR updates the marital status for the couple.
- Once the marriage record (certificate) is requested, the CRVS system generates it and makes it available to Irembo.
- The marriage record (certificate) is requested through Irembo using the NIN.
- The CRVS system produces and makes vital statistics available to the respective stakeholders.

ANNULMENTS

- The spouses or interested person request an annulment.
- The judgement on the nullity of the marriage is passed (definitive court order).
- The court chief registrar notifies the nullity of marriage into the Integrated Electronic Case Management System (IECMS).
- The IECMS sends the nullity of marriage notification to the CRVS system.
- The civil registrar of the sector where the marriage took place approves and registers the nullity of the marriage in the CRVS system.
- The CRVS system updates the marital status of the couple and updates NPR about the details and status of the couple.
- NPR updates the marital status of the couple.
- Once the nullity of marriage record (certificate) is requested, the CRVS system generates it and makes it available to Irembo.
- The nullity of marriage record (certificate) is requested through Irembo using the NIN.
- The CRVS system produces and makes vital statistics available to the respective stakeholders.

DIVORCES

Divorces on Rwandan territory

- The court decides the divorce and issues a divorce judgement.
- IECMS sends the divorce notification to the CRVS system.
- The civil registrar of the sector where the marriage took place approves and registers the divorce in the CRVS system.
- The CRVS system updates the marital status of the divorced couple and updates NPR about the details and status of the divorced couple.
- NPR updates the marital status of the divorced couple.
- Once the divorce record (certificate) is requested, the CRVS system generates it and makes it available to Irembo.
- The divorce record (certificate) is requested through Irembo using the NIN.
- The CRVS system produces and makes vital statistics available to the respective stakeholders.

Divorces abroad

- A competent authority decides the divorce and issues a divorce judgement.
- The divorced couple declares the divorce to the designated civil registration officer at the embassy, high commission, or consulate.
- The designated civil registration officer at the embassy sends the divorce notification to IECMS and the CRVS system.
- For locally registered marriages, the civil registrar of the sector where the marriage took place approves or registers the divorce in the CRVS system.
- The CRVS system updates the marital status of the divorced couple and updates NPR about the details and status of the divorced couple.
- NPR updates the marital status of the divorced couple.
- Once the divorce record (certificate) is requested, the CRVS system generates it and makes it available to Irembo.
- The divorce record (certificate) is requested through Irembo using the NIN.
- The CRVS system produces and makes vital statistics available to the respective stakeholders.

ADOPTIONS

- A person applies for adoption (for full adoption, the competent authority is consulted).
- The domicile sector civil registrar draws up an adoption record and files it with the court for approval.
- The court approves the adoption with an adoption order.
- The court chief registrar notifies the domicile sector civil registrar.
- The domicile sector civil registrar validates the adoption through the CRVS system.
- Once the adoption certificate is requested, the CRVS system generates it and makes it available to Irembo.
- The adoption certificate is requested on Irembo using the NIN.
- The CRVS system produces and makes vital statistics available to the respective stakeholders.

GUARDIANSHIPS

Guardianship of a minor

- Any interested person expresses the need of guardianship of a minor to a civil registrar of the place of the minor's domicile or residence.
- The civil registrar invites family members of the minor to establish the guardianship council.
- The civil registrar informs the guardianship council members of the guardian the parents appointed in a will, or the guardianship council appoints the guardian if not appointed by the parents.
- The domicile or residence sector civil registrar registers the guardianship in the national CRVS system.
- Once the guardianship of a minor record (certificate) is requested, the CRVS system generates it and makes it available to Irembo.
- The guardianship of a minor record (certificate) is requested through Irembo using the NIN.

- The CRVS system produces vital statistics and makes them available.

Guardianship of an adult

- Any interested person expresses the need of guardianship of an adult to the court.
- That person makes a petition to declare the adult a legally incapacitated person.
- The court approves the legal incapacity and appoints the guardian.
- The judgement declaring a person to be legally incapacitated becomes final.
- The chief registrar of the court registers the judgement declaring the legal incapacity in IECMS.
- IECMS sends a notification to the national CRVS system.
- The domicile sector civil registrar validates the event in the CRVS system.
- Once the guardianship of an adult record (certificate) is requested, the CRVS system generates it and makes it available to Irembo.
- The guardianship of an adult record (certificate) is requested through Irembo using the NIN.
- The CRVS system produces vital statistics and makes them available.

RECOGNITIONS

- The parent goes to the civil registrar office to recognize a child.
- The civil registrar validates and registers recognition through the national CRVS system.
- Once the recognition certificate is requested, the CRVS system generates it and makes it available to Irembo.
- The recognition certificate is requested on Irembo using the NIN.
- The CRVS system produces and provides vital statistics to the respective stakeholders.

LEGITIMIZATIONS

- The parents of the child born out of wedlock celebrate their marriage.
- The sector civil registrar at the place of the marriage celebration or place of the child's birth registers the legitimization of the child in the national CRVS system.
- Once the legitimization certificate is requested, the CRVS system generates it and makes it available to Irembo.
- The legitimization certificate is requested on Irembo using the NIN.
- The CRVS system produces vital statistics and makes them available to the respective stakeholders.

The recording of demographic events covers all segments of the population and all geographical regions. Completeness of registration of vital events¹⁹ has been estimated in the past, but no data was provided.

Vital events registration forms²⁰ were approved by Ministerial Order No. 002/07.01 of 27/07/2020 determining the number, type, format, and use of civil status registers.

Social factors affecting registration of vital events

Social factors that influence the recording of demographic events in Rwanda include:

- Some single mothers fear shame or stigma, which results in delayed or late birth registration.
- There can be reluctance to recognize the paternity of children born out of wedlock, which results in untimely recognition of the children and the consequent delay in registering the event. The registration of births has historically been tied to legal marriage, and some people do not know that birth registration without established paternity is legal.
- To a certain extent, gender division of labour affects registration of events, more specifically birth. It's somewhat of a misconception, mostly

in rural areas, that women are the ones who have time to register births. In such cases, timely birth registration is affected.

- The length of time taken to give a name to the newborn is yet another socio-cultural practice that has affected birth registrations. With increased campaigns to change behaviour, this is changing. Previously, Rwandans believed that a newborn's name should be pronounced after a family function to welcome a new baby. This practice may have affected birth registration negatively. Some mothers appear at registration sites with provisional names, which results in future changes and related delays.
- Late or delayed death registration involving a witness can be the result of the grieving process associated with the loss. Some do not make it a priority to register a death during this period. This problem is being addressed through immediate incentives around death registration, such as requiring burial permits for the body disposal.

Backlog of unregistered births

There is no backlog of unregistered births in Rwanda.²¹

Sample registration forms

No sample forms are available.

Registration fee

No fees are charged to register vital events. The fee for issuing and certifying vital events is no more than US\$2 (US\$0.70 for the extract and US\$2 for the detailed one).

Civil registration services can also be accessed via the Rwanda Online Platform known as Irembo. This is an e-government platform through which all government services are provided. Through Irembo citizens access integrated government services via the internet and mobile devices. It hosts over 100 e-services²² offered by different government agencies, with more than 90,000 users a month each. The civil registration fees on the platform are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Civil registration fees in Rwanda.²³

Service	Processing time	Cost (in US \$)	Conditional attachments
Birth certification	24 hours	\$2.10	None
Death registration and certification	24 hours	Registration: free Certificate: \$2.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital death certificate (if death occurred in hospital) • Approved report from cell (if death occurred at home) • Court judgement (if death was not registered within 15 days) • Passport copy (if deceased is a foreigner) • If the death has been registered, other documents are required to issue the certificate
Pre-marriage registration and certification of legal marriage	72 hours	Pre-registration: free Certificate: \$2.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth certificate • Certificate of celibacy • Certificate for widow/widower • Certificate of divorce • Former spouse death certificate • Former spouse marriage certificate • Spouse: birth certificate • Spouse: certificate of celibacy • Spouse: certificate for widow/widower • Spouse: certificate of divorce • Spouse: former spouse death certificate • Spouse: former spouse marriage certificate
Divorce certification	24 hours	\$2.10	None
Adoption event certification	24 hours	\$2.10	None
Child recognition certification	24 hours	\$2.10	None
Guardianship certification	24 hours	\$2.10	None
Certificate of succession	24 hours	Free	None
Certificate of cohabitation	24 hours	Free	Passport copy (for foreigners)
Certificate for widow/widower	24 hours	\$1.50	None
Certificate of residence	24 hours	\$1.50	None

Service	Processing time	Cost (in US \$)	Conditional attachments
Certificate of genocide survivors	24 hours	Free	None
Certificate of celibacy	24 hours	\$0.50	None
Application for national ID correction	30 days	\$1.50	Some documents
Application for national ID	30 days	\$0.50	Some documents
Registration in the National Population Registry	24 hours	Free	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth record • Birth certificate • Extract of the birth certificate
National ID replacement	60 days	\$1.50	None
Certificate for replacement of national ID	24 hours	\$0.50	None
Certificate of full identity	24 hours	\$0.50	None
Change of name	7 days	Free	Marriage record plus one of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baptism card issued at birth • Result slip P6 national exam • Result slip S3 national exam • Result slip S6 national exam • Any national exam registration form with a photo on it • High school diploma
Certificate of nationality	24 hours	\$1.50	None
Certificate of being alive	24 hours	Depends on the case	None
Registration for citizenship	24 hours	Depends on the case	None

Vital statistics system

Vital statistics

The National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) was created in October 2005 as an independent institution under Law No. 53bis/2013 of 28/06/2013 that established the NISR as the primary data producer in Rwanda. NISR is responsible and mandated by law for the collection, compilation, and dissemination of vital statistics from the civil registration system. It also collects or compiles cause-of-death information.

The NISR, in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Health, and NIDA, developed a web-based application system that facilitates the collection, storage, and production of data on civil status events (birth, death, marriage, divorce, adoption, recognition, and guardianship) from civil registration, including causes of death, through

- the 416 sector office registration sites;
- online notifications in all health facilities (birth and death); and
- courts for divorces and other civil status events settled in judiciary settings.

The development of the web-based application was in line with the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS II), where strengthening the civil registration system as a source of vital statistics is one of its strategic objectives. The system was designed primarily for statistical purposes to ensure complete coverage of vital statistics.

The latest report on vital statistics was published and issued in 2019. The vital events compiled from the civil registration system are listed in Table 4.

Table 4: Vital statistics compiled from the civil registration system.

Vital event	Compiled?
Live birth	Yes
Marriage	Yes
Divorce	Yes
Death	Yes
Adoption	Yes

Causes of death

Cause-of-death information is collected through the civil registration system (Table 5).

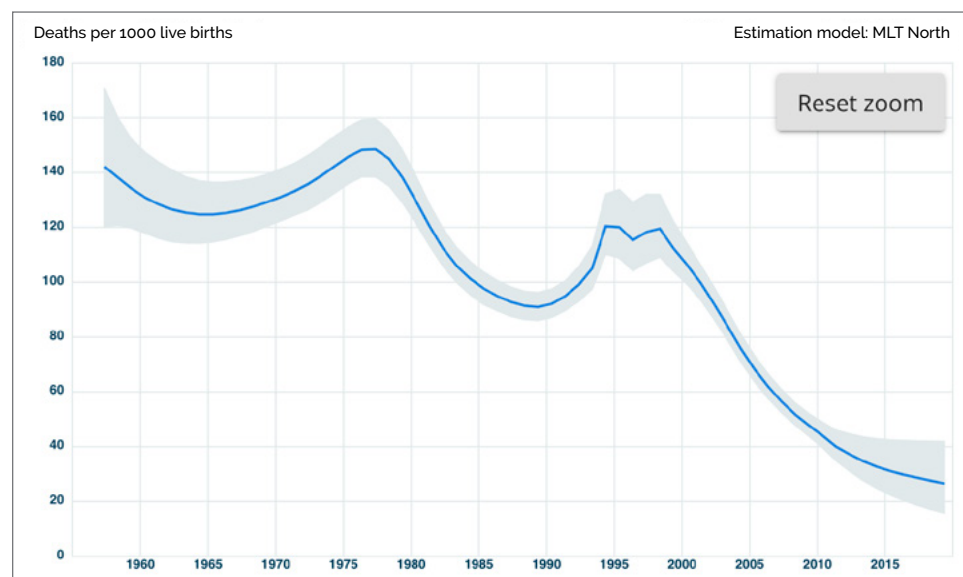
Table 5: Cause-of-death information collection through the civil registration system.

Cause of death (COD)	Is COD information collected through the civil registration system?	Is the Standard International Form of Medical Certificate of COD for recording deaths used?
For deaths occurring in health facilities	Yes	Yes
For natural deaths occurring in communities	Piloted verbal autopsy and in the process of scaling up	A computer certified question from the World Health Organization is used
For non-natural deaths occurring in communities	No	Police form/report is required

For non-institutional deaths, verbal autopsy tools or methods are used for collecting cause-of-death information. The cause of death is coded according to the International Classification of Diseases version 10 (ICD-10).

Sources estimate the infant mortality rate at 28.16 per 1,000 live births in 2017.

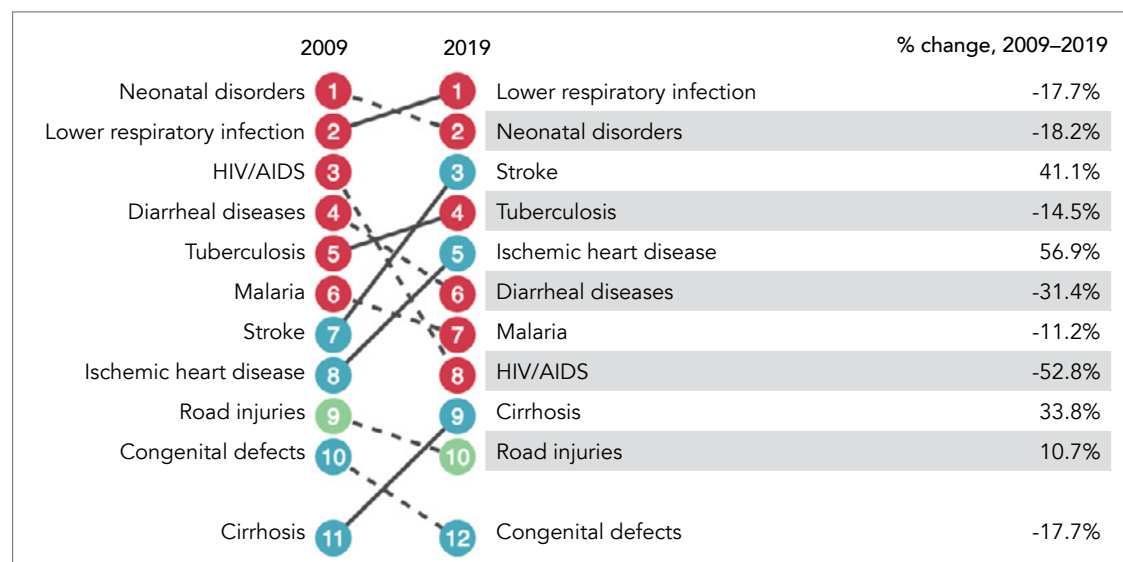
Figure 1: Infant mortality rate — Rwanda.



Source: childmortality.org/data/Rwanda

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation estimated the leading causes of death in Rwanda for 2009 and 2019 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Leading causes of death in 2009 and in 2019.



Source: healthdata.org/rwanda

For verbal autopsies, a new platform known as the Home-Based Care Practitioners (HBCP) program has been piloted in communities at the cell administration level to boost the reporting of community deaths and probable causes of death using verbal autopsy techniques that are internationally recognized. The HBCP program was initiated to

- follow up on palliative care patients suffering from chronic diseases, including end-of-life care and bereavement support to families to reduce the demand on hospitals and make beds available for other patients;
- follow up stable non-communicable disease (NCD) patients at home;
- screen for NCDs; and
- conduct verbal autopsies (VA) using the standardized Smart VA questionnaire.

The home-based care staff were differentiated with voluntary community health workers by their educational background and work package. These staff were trained to notify community deaths in CRVS web-based system and conduct verbal autopsies to determine a probable cause of death for deaths occurring in the community. CRVS web-based application is linked with the Inter-VA questionnaire installed in their Android tablets. The program was piloted within 107 cells selected across all provinces of Rwanda.

Digitization

A company was hired to digitize civil registration in Rwanda. The Ministry of ICT and Innovation and the Rwanda Information Society Authority, the government agency in charge of information and communications technologies, oversaw the process. Rwanda's civil registration data is hosted in the government data centre.

Computerization

The Government of Rwanda is modernizing the CRVS system through NIDA to deliver services and issue certificates at points of service. It has created the National Centralized and Integrated CRVS System (NCI-CRVS) that can capture data on vital events and produce statistical data for public and private institutions.

This IT tool builds on eight vital event outcomes, as provided for by Law No. 32/2016. The system records data for each Rwandan and issues civil registration certificates. These vital events are

- birth;
- death;
- marriage;
- divorce;
- annulment of marriage;
- adoption;
- recognition of a child born out of wedlock; and
- guardianship.

The national CRVS system is expected to

- capture data on vital events in a timely way;
- share and monitor population civil status dynamics more effectively and efficiently to avoid gaps and duplication in activities; and
- provide informed decision-making processes.

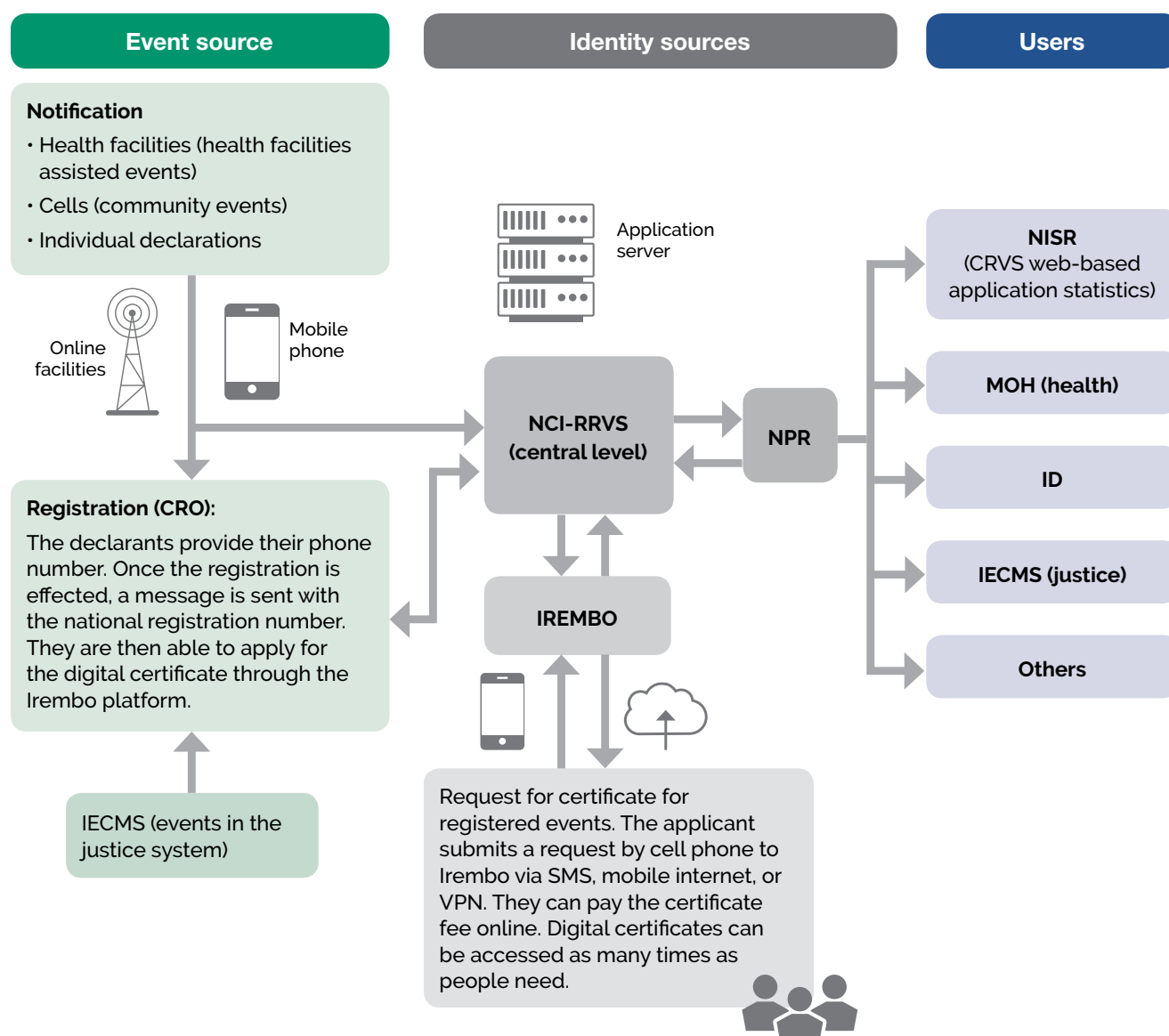
The NCI-CRVS System, which was launched on 10 August 2020, offers the possibility of interoperability between the CRVS and the NPR using a unique identification number assigned at birth. This system is already functional in major hospitals in a pilot phase (to be extended to all health facilities across the country) for live births and deaths occurring there and at some of the lowest administrative points of contact (cells) with the population for events occurring at home. The new system allows notification by nurses and declaration by the person accompanying the mother or the mother herself. Registration is therefore done at the health facility. The informant provides his or her telephone number so that once registration is done, a message is sent with the national registration number. They can then request the digital birth certificate through Irembo.

The digital certificates can be viewed as many times as people need. Currently, only two events (birth and death) can be registered as described above, but other modules are being developed to enable electronic notification and registration of marriages, divorces, and marriage annulments, which will be integrated into the Ministry of Justice's electronic records management system. After the court proceedings, notifications will be sent to the civil registration agency to allow for the completion of the process and the issuance of the respective certificates.

The four remaining events (adoptions, legitimation, recognition, and guardianship) will be developed before the end of 2021. There is also a link with the NISR for the dissemination of CRVS data and the extraction of vital statistics to produce the reports. The data is also transmitted to the social registry system to provide services, particularly for newborns, who require health insurance immediately after birth. Rwanda hopes to digitize all eight vital events by 2021 to have a comprehensive CRVS system that records all vital events from notification to registration and certification. The system will also allow for the production and storage of digital certificates and, over time, the development of family trees.

The NPR will be automatically updated as information is entered into the NCI-CRVS database. All users, such as functional registries, will also have access to the NPR for their service delivery to citizens and residents with full respect for the protection of personal data and privacy. It is anticipated that over the next few years, this new system will support all government agencies and services. It is also expected that the traditional census will be lightened by a system output that will count living populations geographically across the country.

Figure 3: NCI-CRVS system architecture.



The current procedures for updating the NPR have made it possible to expand the database and update the essential information it contains. As of early 2021, we estimate that it contains more than 11,446,349 pieces of information on citizens, out of a resident population of 12,374,397, as provided by the 2012 National Population and Housing Census, or 93 percent of the population. The database continues to grow, making it possible to track

the annual birth rate. Registration in the NPR is mandatory for Rwandans, foreigners, and refugees of all ages, including children, who by law must be registered by their parents or guardians.

The civil registration system links a wide range of stakeholders involved in vital events activities.

Computer use is outlined in Table 6.

Table 6: Computer use in CRVS.

Centre	Are computers used for civil registration?
Local registration offices across the country	Yes
Sectors	Yes
Healthcare facilities	Yes
Courts	Yes
Cell offices	Yes
Embassies	Yes

Online registration services

The internet is used to transfer civil registration information to the next higher-level registration offices. It is also used to transfer vital statistics data from the civil registration system to the NISR office responsible for compiling vital statistics. The civil registration office continues to digitize manual and historical records.

Mobile technology application

NIDA services, like other government services, are provided through the Irembo portal. Irembo has arrangements with various mobile network operators. Mobile technology is used for

- applying for any government service, such as national ID and civil registry certificates;
- paying for these services through mobile money (e-transfer); and
- issuing certificates and verifying the national ID.

Unique identification number

People can apply for the national ID at NIDA headquarters, at a sector office, or online through the Irembo website. This gives them a unique identification number.

This e-service enables Rwanda citizens to apply for a national ID. The service is open to Rwandan citizens living in Rwanda. For those living outside of Rwanda, they must visit the NIDA headquarters in Rwanda to apply for an ID.

The processing time for a national ID is 30 days. The fee is 500 Rwandan francs (US\$0.50).

Population register

The National Population Register (NPR) is the repository that contains a complete list of the inhabitants of the country. As the country's historical identity registers were completely destroyed during the conflicts and wars that ended in 1994, the country resorted to conducting a one-time campaign for registration of the population to serve as a baseline. Over a three-day weekend (Friday to Sunday) in 2007, the government asked everyone to stay put where they were while thousands of civil servants went door to door and registered 9.2 million people. This information was entered into a computerized database and constituted Rwanda's baseline population register.

The identity data contained in the NPR is a minimal set of searchable alphanumeric fields which includes name, date of birth, place of birth, sex, address, name of parents, etc. It does not include any sensitive data such as race, ethnicity, religion, social origin, beliefs, group memberships, physical or mental disability, or health status; nor does it include biometric information. Biometrics are included in the national ID card database.

Update of the National Population Register

Each entry to the NPR is attributed an 8-digit number called the NPR Application Number (AN). Unlike the NIN, which is printed on the ID card and attributed to those 16 years of age and above, the AN is not printed anywhere, even though it is unique. This number is supposed to be for internal purposes only. But given that children less than 16 years of age do not have an NIN, this number could play an important role.

Updating the NPR involves a process that allows for the transfer of information from local civil registration offices to the NPR, which is a centralized electronic database in Kigali. This involves generating a notification form filled in by hand each time a new event is registered in the paper civil registry (ledger paper). For example, if a birth takes place and is recorded in a birth register, a separate form on plain paper is filled out to notify the NPR of the event. These forms are collected

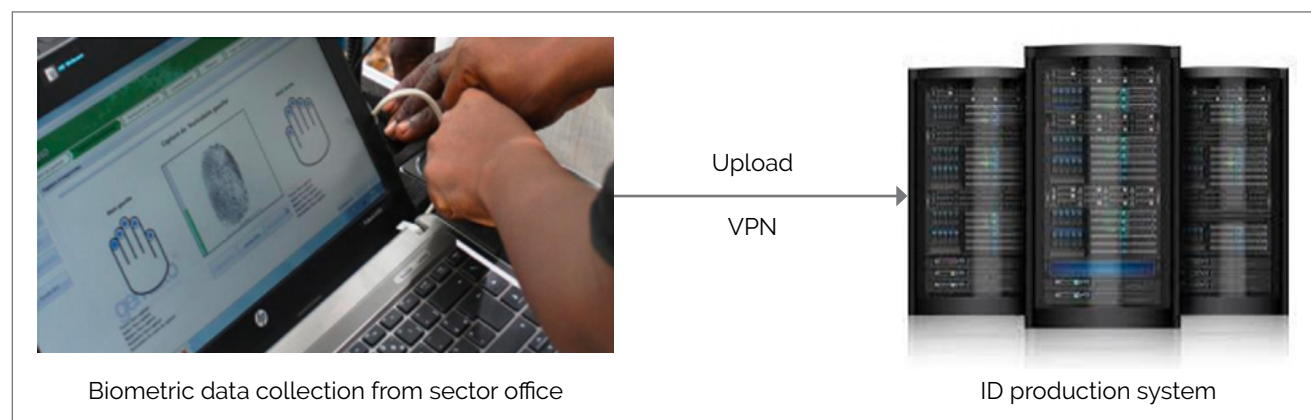
continuously by staff and are taken to Kigali where the data are entered by staff. This mechanism, although not very technical and rather tedious, is valuable because it ensures that the data stored centrally is up to date, thus enhancing the value of the identity repositories.

Link with identification system

An existing identification (ID) system is linked to civil registration. NIDA is responsible for population registration, issuing the national ID credential, and civil registration.

In addition to the NPR, which covers the entire population, there is a database that covers only those 16 years of age and older and contains biometric data. These individuals are required to visit an enrollment centre within six months of their 16th birthday to complete their biometric enrollment (including two fingerprints and a photograph) and apply for a national ID card.

Figure 4: National identity card's remote biometric data capture stations and online upload system.



Currently, 99 percent of eligible citizens have ID with biometrics in the national identification database, which corresponds to about 56 percent of the total resident population. The identity card is considered personal property and must be requested in person at the registry office where the person has been registered in the NPR or at the head office of the identification agency in Kigali for special circumstances.

The 16-digit NIN, printed on the front of the national ID card, is an important identifier in Rwanda. It is attributed to a single individual for life. The intention behind this is to provide a unique interface between a person and government agencies. It is also to simplify and improve service management and administration. There is a total reliance on this number across all government agencies and services; more than 45 institutions (including public and private) and 416 sectoral offices are connected to the NPR for citizens' online authentication. It is also expected that the traditional census will be lightened going forward and would be replaced by an output from the system that would tally the active NINs geographically across the country.

The following groups use the NIN as a customer identifier:

- All government organizations;
- The electoral commission;
- Police;
- Notaries at district and sector levels;
- Almost all banking institutions in the country;
- Telecom operators; and
- Other service providers.²⁴

The data protection law in place is Law No. 24/2016. The guidelines are embedded in the NIDA CRVS systems. With civil registration and ID interlinked, a unique number common to both is used.

Interface with other sectors and operations

The CRVS sector is involved in the notification of births and deaths in health facilities. The NIDA-CRVS system is based in health facilities: data managers update the system with the vital events occurring there. According to the 2010 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 91 percent of births take place in healthcare institutions.

Improvement initiatives and external support

Improvement plan and budget

Strategic plan

Rwanda has a five-year CRVS National Strategic Plan (2017/18–2021/22). The estimated cost of implementation is US\$9.5 million, of which US\$3 million is provided by development partners.

The core values as highlighted in the CRVS National Strategic Plan are as follows:

- **Excellence and innovation** (*Kugiraumuco wo kubaindashyikirwa no guhangaudushya*): The Government of Rwanda is eager to build a modernized and integrated CRVS system that can serve multiple purposes through innovative and effective work. It will strive to take advantage of all opportunities and internal strengths by applying new strategic technologies and methods to consistently meet users' expectations.
- **Collaboration and teamwork** (*Gukorerahamwe*): Civil registration and vital statistics have several stakeholders, both in terms of supply and demand. They all have to work together in the interest of citizens. The government will consider collaboration and teamwork as important factors in building a strong CRVS system.

- **Commitment to achieving results** (*Kurangizaibyowatangiyi*): The spirit of hard work will characterize all the government's efforts to get rid of the scandal of invisibility in civil registration and vital statistics. The government will endeavour to implement and complete what it has planned or started.
- **Transparency and accountability** (*Gukorera mu mucyo no kubazwaibyodukora*): Civil registration and vital statistics provide multiple benefits. The right of a person to be counted at the two extremes of life is fundamental for social inclusion. To serve all, the government will be transparent and fair with its methods of operations and reporting.
- **Perceptiveness** (*Gushishoza*): There are many factors and approaches that can benefit some

and disadvantage others in accessing quality civil registration. Therefore, it is imperative that due consideration be given to all possible exceptional cases to ensure full registration coverage. The government will ensure that the principles of integrity, honesty, impartiality, fairness, and objectivity will always be respected.

Budgetary allocations and requirements

The Government Treasury allocated US\$1.4 million for the civil registration system for fiscal year 2019–2020.

Activities identified as high priorities

Some activities are identified in the national plan as high priorities but lack funding, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: CRVS activities identified as high priorities but without funding.

High-priority areas in the strategic plan lacking funding	Estimated cost in US\$	Expected budget gaps in US\$	Remarks
Clearing the civil registration backlog	\$35,000	\$35,000	Once
Hiring new civil registration officers (capacity building)	\$20,000	\$20,000	Annually, to ensure that the CRVS system is sustainable

Some of the upcoming priorities in the country's planning cycle for civil registration include:

- Deployment of the NCI-CRVS to all points of service: health facilities, embassies, sectors, cells, and courts.
- Increasing awareness among service providers by introducing CRVS Week, where the best performing civil registration office is awarded a prize. Awareness campaigns encourage citizens to register their civil registration events on time.
- Training other actors in communities, including community health workers, to encourage people to register their events.

Support from development partners

The international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other organizations that support the improvement of the civil registration system in Rwanda are listed in Table 8.

Table 8: CRVS external support.

International organizations, NGOs, and partners	Mandate
Global Financing Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the functionality of the CRVS information system to allow timely birth registration and to facilitate interoperability of the CRVS information system with other relevant systems • Design and roll out social and behaviour change communication campaign(s) to improve the registration of births, deaths, and other vital events • Provide training and sensitization to local government officials and other actors involved at different levels on their roles and responsibilities in strengthening the CRVS system
The United Nations Population Fund, World Health Organization, and Bloomberg Philanthropies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide external support to the vital statistics system
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Secretariat of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS), and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear the backlog of civil registration events and the digitization of past events • Offer user refresher training to onboard and build the capacities of civil registration and civil registration officers (there are no CRVS training institutions in Rwanda) • Train civil registration teams in measurement and evaluation tools to ensure CRVS is done according to standards

Conclusion

The Rwanda CRVS National Strategic Plan for 2017/18–2021/22 is in the middle of its implementation. Its mission, “To register vital events to safeguard the rights of all and inform evidence-based decisions,” is to be achieved by 2022 through a well-functioning CRVS system. This would eventually lead to the attainment of the vision: “Make every life known and count.”

The strong political will and support in Rwanda is conducive for creating a well-functioning CRVS system. However, this political will and leadership should involve sufficient financial support. Using civil registration products and services, such as a birth certificate, should be seen as the only way to validate individuals' identity and date of birth.

NIDA, through the Ministry of Local Government, has done a mid-term review of CRVS systems in Rwanda. NIDA continues to

- strengthen the coordination mechanism for CRVS systems;
- oversee the strengthening of its civil registration structure, through which the NIDA-CRVS system will be expanded; and
- strengthen the CRVS system to allow for timely birth registration and to make it easier for the CRVS system to operate with other relevant systems.

Resources

Websites

National Identification Agency:

nida.gov.rw

National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda:

statistics.gov.rw

Additional materials

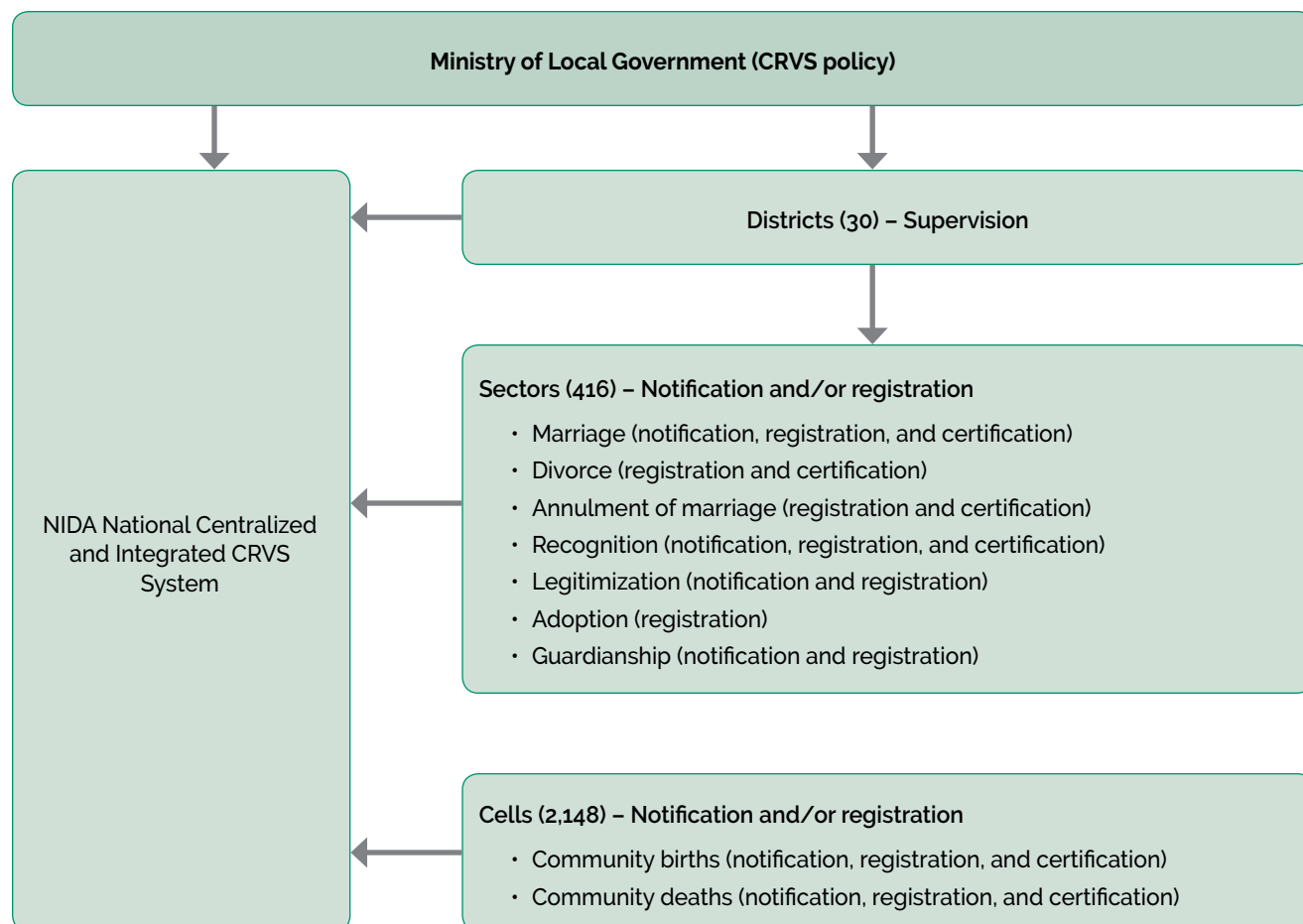
National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda. 2016. Rwanda Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems. Comprehensive Assessment Final Report. Vol. I. statistics.gov.rw/publication/rwanda-civil-registration-and-vital-statistics-crvs-systems-0

National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda. 2018. CRVS National Strategic Plan 2017/18–2021/22. statistics.gov.rw/publication/crvs-national-strategic-plan

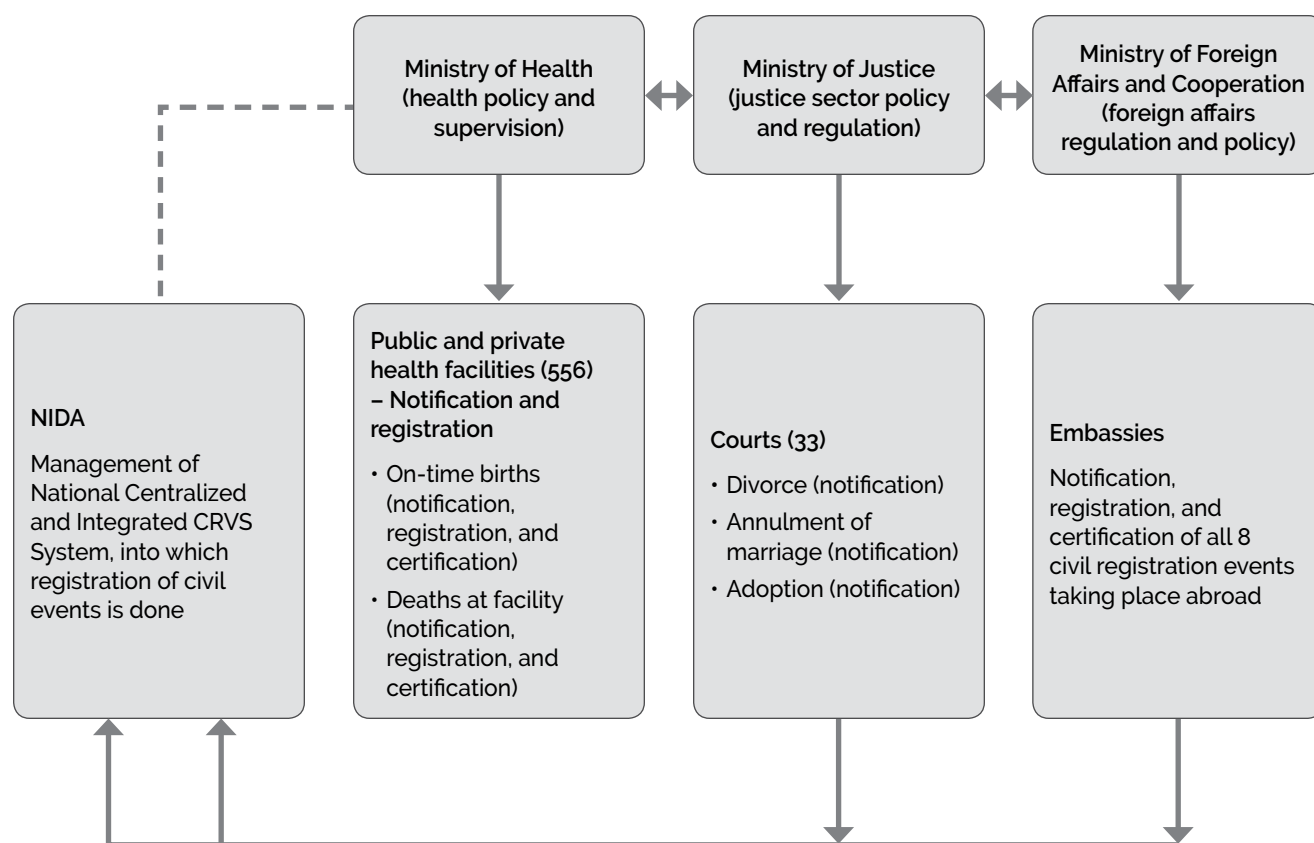
National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda. 2019. National Gender Statistics Report 2019. statistics.gov.rw/publication/national-gender-statistics-report-2019



Annex 1: Civil registration in local government points of service (structure)



Annex 2: Civil registration at health facilities and courts points of service (structure)



Endnotes

- 1 Wikipedia. 2020. Geography of Rwanda and Climate of Rwanda. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rwanda#Geography
- 2 National Institute of Statistics. statistics.gov.rw/home
- 3 World Bank. 2019. Population growth (annual %). data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW
- 4 National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda. 2014. RPHC4 Thematic Report: Population Size, Structure and Distribution. statistics.gov.rw/publication/rphc4-thematic-report-population-size-structure-and-distribution
- 5 Birth or death registration completeness means the actual number of registered births or deaths divided by the estimated number of births or deaths in a particular country or area, in a specified time period, usually one year. Source: ECA, ESCAP, and Statistics Norway. 2016.
- 6 Trading Economics. 2017. Rwanda – Health Expenditure, Total (% of GDP). tradingeconomics.com/rwanda/health-expenditure-total-percent-of-gdp-wb-data.html
- 7 UNICEF. 2015. Rwanda – Key demographic indicators. UNICEF Data: Monitoring the situation of children and women. data.unicef.org/country/rwa/
- 8 UNICEF. MICS Report. 2010.
- 9 UNICEF. DPT1: Surviving infants who received the first dose of diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus (DPT) vaccine.
- 10 World Bank. 2018. World Development Indicators. databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=2&country=MWI
- 11 Trading Economics. 2017. Rwanda – Physicians. tradingeconomics.com/rwanda/physicians-per-1-000-people-wb-data.html
- 12 World Bank. 2017. Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15–19). data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT?locations=RW
- 13 United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME). 2018. Under-5 Mortality Rate, Infant Mortality Rate and Neonatal Mortality Database 2018. childmortality.org/data/Rwanda
- 14 World Health Organization (WHO). 2015. Global Health Observatory country views. Rwanda statistics summary (2002–present). apps.who.int/gho/data/node.country.country-RWA
- 15 National Institute of Statistics. 2016. Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey 2014–15. dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR316/FR316.pdf
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 CRVS National Strategic Plan for 2017/18–2021/22. statistics.gov.rw/file/6272/download?token=FoZJXDcj
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Completeness of registration means the current number of demographic events (births or deaths) divided by the estimated number of demographic events (births or deaths). A complete registration or 100 percent completeness is achieved when every demographic event that occurred in the population of a given country (or region) during a specific period has been recorded in the system.
- 20 Official Gazette No. 37 of 12/09/2016. *Law No. 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 Governing Persons and Family*. ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/102818/124438/F-466022709/RWA-102818.pdf
- 21 All unregistered births in the year following the occurrence of the event.
- 22 Irembo. irembo.gov.rw/home/citizen/
- 23 The complete list of services available online can be found at new.irembo.gov.rw/home/citizen/all_services.
- 24 Currently, ID serves for verification and validation across other sectors and as a real-time population registry by local government offices, health, social protection programs (nutrition-sensitive direct support), education (national exams), telecom, banks, free movement of people (between Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda), and the electoral list.



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
for CRVS Systems

LE CENTRE D'EXCELLENCE
sur les systèmes ESEC

www.CRVSystems.ca



Global Affairs
Canada

Affaires mondiales
Canada



IDRC • CRDI

International Development Research Centre
Centre de recherches pour le développement international

We Support



**GLOBAL
FINANCING
FACILITY**

Canada